Blanche Park Reservoir Dam ReconstructionProject

District Ranger, Bill Edwards is proposing to authorize the rebuild of Blanche Park Dam and associated facilities, including an access road, on about 16 acres. These actions are proposed to be implemented on the Grand Valley Ranger District of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forest.

The Forest Service is planning on preparing an environmental assessment (EA) to determine whether implementation of rebuilding Blanche Park Dam and access road may significantly affect the quality of the human environment and thereby require the preparation of an environmental impact statement. By preparing an EA, we are fulfilling agency policy and direction to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Proposed Project Location

The existing Blanche Park Dam is located near Forest Service Road (FS RD) 125 on the Grand Mesa. The project area, including the dam (0.76 acre), access road (0.92 acre), and inundated area (13.89 acre) encompasses a total of about 15.57 acres on Grand Mesa's subalpine woodlands and wetlands. The Grand Mesa Water Conservancy District (GMWCD) proposes to replace the dam and create water storage of the same volume as was in place historically. The dam would replace a structure that was first constructed in about 1895, enlarged in about 1905, and breached in about 1946 according to documentation on record. The dam would provide about 62 acre-feet per year of agricultural/irrigation water to lands in the vicinity of Cedaredge. It would be operated and maintained for the life of the project, storing water for a period of about 4 to 6 weeks before releasing it into an existing reservoir (Trickel Park Reservoir, AKA Park Reservoir) that is about 0.20 miles downstream. The proposed project is located on the Grand Mesa, about 11 miles north of Cedaredge, in the Surface Creek watershed. The project is in Section 35, Township 11 South, Range 94 West, of the Sixth Principal Meridian. The UTM coordinates of the approximate center of the project area are NAD 83: Zone 13N; 251515E, 4326755N; Lat., Long.; USGS Leon Peak, CO Quadrangle; Delta County, Colorado (Figure 1).

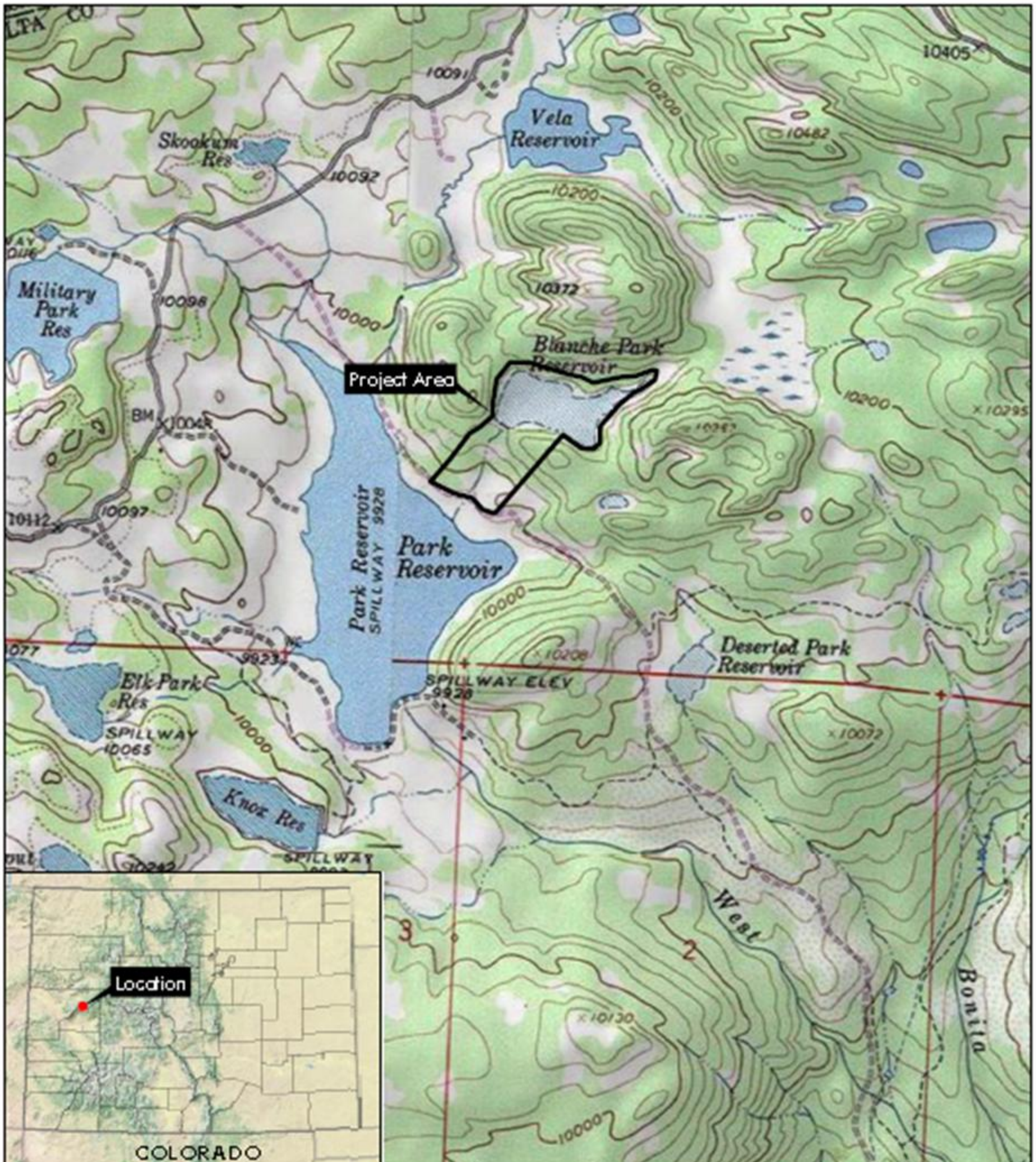
Proposed Action

The proposed action is to reconstruct the existing dam (approximately 350-feet in total length) and install a new underdrain. The capacity of a rebuilt reservoir at the Blanche Park site would be approximately 62 AF, with a normal pool elevation of about 10,082.6 feet. At normal pool, the surface area of the reservoir would be about 14 acres.

The project area (approximately 16 acres, see Figure 2, and Table 1) would be cleared and grubbed, including the removal and disposal of trees under 18" in diameter, brush and vegetation from the project area as needed and the area to receive fill would be cleared and grubbed of all organic or deleterious materials to allow for compaction and structural fill placement.

Table 1: Blanche Park Reservoir Footprint

Blanche Park Reservoir Feature	Acres affected
Dam	0.76
Inundation	13.89
Road	0.92
TOTAL	15.57



Blanche Park Reservoir

Section 35, T11S, R94W, 6th PM

UTM NAD 83: Zone 13N, 2516056mE, 4326716mN

Latitude, Longitude: 39.054219°N, 107.870508°W

USGS Leon Peak, CO Quadrangle, Delta County, Colorado

0 750 1,500 feet

N

Figure 1
Site Location

Prepared for: Grand Mesa Water Conservancy District
File: 4552 figure 1 blanche park.mxd (WD)
March 2012

ERO Resources Corp.

Portions of this document include intellectual property of ESRI and its licensors and are used herein under license. Copyright © 2011 ESRI and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Access

An access road west of the dam would be constructed and maintained over the long term (see Figure 2). After construction is complete, the road would provide access to the dam for general maintenance. The road would have a running surface approximately 12 feet wide by 1,290 feet long, beginning at 2500 Road and traversing to the dam location. Due to the steep terrain, the average cut and fill width of the road would be about 30 feet. The elevation of the proposed access road would range from 9,965 feet to 10,080 feet.

The access road would provide administrative access for GMWCD, and a locked gate would be installed at the entrance to preclude public access. Other project access required would include 2500 Road (about 0.75 miles north of the project area) and Trickle Park Road (about 0.25 miles to the Military Park pit entrance).

Portions of the proposed access road appear to overlap a previous road, potentially the access road associated with the original dam construction.

Dam construction

The berm would be re-shaped and an additional 153 cubic feet of fill placed on the dam, along with a mat to protect the earthen dam, composed of 9-inch riprap, about 1-foot in thickness. A temporary staging area (150 by 60-foot) for the construction would be established on the south side of the dam, then shaped for inundation. Depending on the results of materials testing of the existing dam structure, materials may need to be mixed to achieve the appropriate composition to meet compression requirements. It is anticipated that materials would be processed and mixed at the Military Park Pit, which is located about 0.75 miles north of the project area. The construction process would use excess excavated materials already stored at the Military Park Pit.

A concrete headwall, concrete caissons, a head gate, stem and wheel, and erosion control facilities would be installed.

Construction would occur during normal daytime working hours, and standard earth-moving equipment would be used, such as loaders, dump trucks, and pickup trucks.

A water control plan would be implemented to address needs for water diversion and dewatering during construction.

Operation

The proposed operation of the reservoir would include holding water in Blanche Park for a brief period during spring run-off, and releasing water into the Trickle Park Reservoir (approximately 0.20 mile downstream) as soon as water demand for irrigation creates space within that reservoir's storage capacity. Snow melt may occur between mid-May and mid-June at the elevations in the project area, and particularly along the shaded southern edges of the reservoir snow remains later in the year. There is not an anticipated firm operating schedule for releasing water out of Blanche Park; however water would be released very early in the year, potentially by mid-June and by mid-July at the latest. That would occur as soon as additional storage is available in Park. Anticipated length of storage for water within Blanche Park is about 4 to 6 weeks. Depth of water is shallow due to the shallow inundation pool; approximate maximum depth at the dam is about 22 feet. At the fringes of the reservoir pool, the depth of the water would be much shallower with maximum depth of about 6 to 12 inches.

Blanche Park Reservoir

- Dam (0.76 ac)
- Inundation (13.89 ac)
- Road (0.92 ac)

Aerial Image: USDA NAIP, 2015

0 150 300 feet

N

Figure 2
Project Limits

Prepared for: Grand Mesa Water Conservancy District
File: 4552 Figure 2 Blanche Res Proj Limit.mxd (WH)
July 15, 2016

ERO Resources Corp.

Reclamation

At the end of the construction phase, disturbed surfaces would be re-seeded with a USFS-approved seed mix (see Table 2), and treated with mulch as needed to reclaim and restore the project area. Portions of the access road would be reclaimed, and the long-term road width would be only wide enough to accommodate an ATV for maintenance access. The project area would be monitored for noxious weeds which would be documented and treated in coordination with the USFS.

Table 2. Seed Mix (Aspen/Spruce)

Species	Rate	Percent of Mix
Mountain Brome Grass	5lbs/ac	26%
Slender Wheatgrass	3lbs/ac	16%
Thick Wheatgrass	3lbs/ac	16%
Candy Bluegrass	3lbs/ac	16%
Blue Wild Rye	5lbs/ac	26%

All disturbed areas would be re-seeded per the above Forest Service specifications; certified Weed Free Seed Mix for Aspen/Spruce type 8,000-9,500 feet in elevation.

Schedule

Construction would occur over a 3 to 4 month period and require a crew of 2 to 5 persons. Equipment used for the construction of the dam includes a bulldozer, backhoe, front-end loader, dump truck, and pickup trucks. The proposed construction timeline includes the construction season in summer and fall 2017 and 2018.

Project Design Features

The following design features are proposed as part of the Proposed Action, and would be implemented by the applicant.

Table 3. Design Features

General	
1.	Plans and specifications will be reviewed in accordance with federal laws and Forest Service standards and criteria for high hazard dams.
Wildlife Resources and Recreation	
2.	All solid wastes/refuse will be properly stored.
3.	All solid wastes will be removed from NFS lands, except for burnable kitchen wastes.
4.	Latrines will be located at least 200' from water and filled in after completion of project.
5.	Latrines will be used for human wastes and kitchen wastewater.
6.	All fuel shall be stored in an approved spill containment structure that shall be of sufficient capacity to contain all the fuel stored in the structure. The basic containment structure shall include an HDPE-lined basin and berm to contain spills or leaks. Fuel will be stored more than 100 feet from the surface water. All hazardous material will be removed from the site by the end of the operating season. A hazardous spill kit will be on site.
7.	Staging areas, fuel storage and containment area, and other facilities needed for Blanche Park Dam reconstruction will be identified by GMWCD prior to initiation of project.
8.	Post signs at trailhead, by mid-summer to alert hunters or other potentially affected users.
Water and Fisheries	
9.	As much work as possible will be accomplished outside of the standing water.
10.	If water needs to be pumped over the dam during construction, the pumped water should flow into sites that would not erode. The rocky channel downgradient of the existing dam site is suitable.
11.	Disturbed areas, including soil borrow areas, as much as is practical, shall be confined to upland areas as well as the Military Park Pit.
Heritage Resource	

12.	If previously unknown sites are discovered during implementation, project activities in the vicinity of the site must be halted and the Forest's Heritage Program Manager notified.
Revegetation and Reclamation	
13.	All equipment and supplies should be inspected and cleaned of weed-seed prior to entering the project area. Weed-seed free materials (mulch and seed) would be used.
Air Quality	
14.	Dust control for exposed soil areas at the project site would be abated with water as needed. Water must be collected from an authorized and approved source.
Soil	
15.	Work would be suspended when soil rutting greater than 2 inches occurs on existing roads.
16.	A contingency plan and response guide for spill emergencies, including onsite and during transport, shall be submitted and approved by the Forest Service prior to onsite fuel storage.
Safety	
17.	A Forest Service wilderness ranger will discuss resource protection standards with workers.
18.	The Forest Service, prior to commencement of work, will approve all specifications and plans prepared by GMWCD.
19.	The Forest Service engineer is responsible to approve any work from a technical standpoint and assure that the work meets dam safety laws and regulations.

Submitting Comments

The Forest Service values your comments and concerns. The Blanche Park Reservoir Reconstruction Project is subject to comment pursuant to 36 CFR 218, Subparts A and C. Only those who submit timely project specific written comments during a designated public comment period will be eligible to file an objection. Individuals or representatives of an entity submitting comments must sign the comments or verify identity upon request. The Forest Service will accept l scoping comments on this proposal for 30 days following publication of the legal notice in the *Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*which is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. Commenters should not rely upon dates or timeframes provided by any other source. Comments may be mailed to or delivered to during business hours (M-F 8:00am to 4:30pm):

Grand Valley Ranger District
Attn: Blanche Park Reservoir Reconstruction
2777 Crossroads Boulevard, Suite 1,
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506;

Submitted by FAX to: (970) 874-6691.

Or submitted electronically in common (.doc, .pdf, .rtf, .txt) formats, to: **comments-rocky-mountain-gmug@fs.fed.us** with Subject: Blanche Park Reservoir Reconstruction Project.

Names of commenters will be part of the public record. For more information, contact Matthew Dare, at Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests Forest Supervisor's Office, 2250 Highway 50 Delta, Colorado 81416; mdare@fs.fed.us, or call (970) 874-6651.